

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-15 and 17-27 are pending in this application, and all claims are rejected. Further consideration is requested in view of the following remarks.

Claims 1-15 and 17-20 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Hidaka. The rejection of these claims is respectfully traversed.

It is well settled that a patent claim is invalid as anticipated under 35 USC 102(e) if every limitation in a claim is found in a single prior art reference, either explicitly or inherently. All claim limitations must be considered, and none can be selectively ignored.

Applicant continues to assert that there are clear differences between the present invention as claimed, and the invention taught by Hidaka. Applicant stands by the arguments made in the previous response regarding the pertinent node voltages taught by Hidaka:

Hidaka teaches an internal circuit node voltage Vccs, which is clearly shown in FIG. 19. The actual power supply is Vcc, which is a normal external power supply having a substantially constant voltage level, and is not generated by the circuit itself. In contrast, the internal voltage, Vccs, is generated by a P-channel transistor, which is in turn switched by the gate voltage signal designated "Φ". In effect, the internal voltage Vccs is merely an internal signal node or a power-gated supply line with a varying voltage signal. Evidence of this is given in the immediately adjacent timing diagram of FIG. 20, in which Vccs is shown to be a switched signal and not a "supply voltage source" as claimed. (emphasis added)

In an attempt to obtain the allowance of claims 1-15 and 17-27, each of the independent claims 1, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19 were restricted so that the supply voltage source cannot be more broadly interpreted than was originally intended. Each of the independent claims has been amended to recite that the supply voltage source provides a "substantially constant" power supply voltage and not a switched internal circuit signal or gated power supply voltage as taught in Hidaka. Similarly, independent claims 1, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19 were amended to claim a "substantially constant" reference voltage source to prevent the reference voltage source from being more broadly interpreted than was originally intended.

The Examiner's two comments regarding these arguments are respectfully traversed.

Firstly, the fact that the claims do not recite "any external power supply" is not relevant to the patentability of the claims. Applicant is not relying on the naked internal/external power supply distinction, which perhaps would have been separately challenged, but rather on the objective, demonstrable distinction between a circuit node voltage that is "substantially constant" versus a circuit node voltage that is not substantially constant. The term "substantially constant" is used to make explicit what most persons of ordinary skill in the art already view as a feature of a supply voltage or a reference voltage and is being used specifically to overcome the teachings of the Hidaka reference. Typically, external power supply voltages are "substantially constant." Sometimes internally generated power supply voltages are not substantially constant but are switched in and out as is the case in Hidaka. The full sentence in question referred to by the Examiner is:

The actual power supply is Vcc, which is a normal external power supply having a substantially constant voltage level, and is not generated by the circuit itself. (emphasis added)

Thus, it can be seen that the claims were amended to include a bona fide claim limitation associated with external power supply voltages and reference voltages and there is no need to include the term "external."

Secondly, the Examiner's own argument "substantially constant (Standby period only)" is self-refuting. The term "substantially constant" would be clear to those skilled in the art, especially with respect to power supply voltages and reference voltages, i.e. providing a constant voltage with minor variations due to noise and glitches. Intentionally switching an internal supply voltage in and out between different voltage levels during different operating modes cannot be said to be consistent with the term "substantially constant."

Claims 1, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19, therefore, are still deemed to be allowable as containing a limitation not taught in the Hidaka reference. The remaining claims are deemed to be allowable as being dependent from an allowable base claim for the reasons given above.

In view of all of the above, claims 1-15 and 17-27 are believed to be allowable and the case in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this case, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

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No additional fee is believed due for this submittal. However, any fee deficiency associated with this submittal may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1123.

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Respectfully submitted,



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